

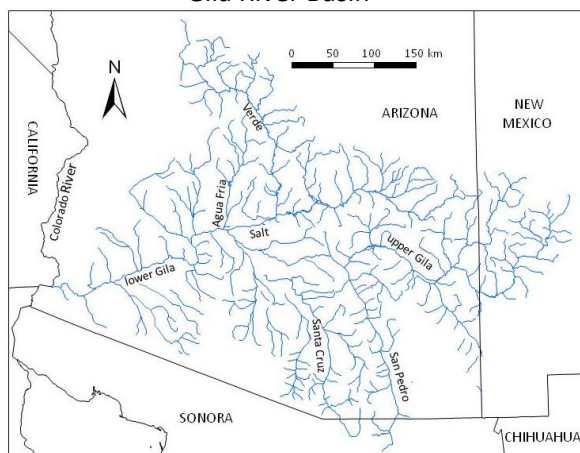
Gila River Basin Native Fishes Conservation Program

Project Summary: As a result of a 1994 Endangered Species Act consultation, Reclamation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crafted a suite of conservation measures to offset impacts of the Central Arizona Project to threatened and endangered fishes of the Gila River basin, Arizona-New Mexico. Together the measures comprise a program that assists with the recovery of native fishes by monitoring the spread and impacts of nonnative invasive fishes, erecting physical and electrical barriers to limit the spread of nonnatives, providing funding to further control invasive fishes and conserve native species, and educating the public about the value of native fish and the problems nonnatives can create for them. This long-term program encompasses many goals of the America's Great Outdoor's initiative, including the protection and renewal of rivers and streams, engagement of youth in the conservation of the natural environment, and enhancing the government's role in recovering the fish and wildlife of the nation and its people.

Strategic Value: The Gila River basin is home to 19 native freshwater fishes, seven of which are found nowhere else in the world. Situated within one of the hottest and most arid environments on earth, the Gila River basin is an exemplar of the conflicts between developing water for a burgeoning human population while protecting and sustaining the fishes that need that same water to survive. A result is that 13 of the 19 fishes are either listed or candidate species under the Endangered Species Act and one is recently extinct. This unique fauna cannot be recovered unless water is maintained in their rivers and streams, and their interactions with nonnative invasive fishes are limited or removed. The Gila River Basin Native Fishes Conservation Program confronts these problems with an array of proven techniques that is showing significant progress in restoring these remarkable species across their former ranges.

Benefits: Recovery of federally-listed fishes will assist with the broad goals of the Endangered Species Act to conserve the various species of fish and wildlife facing extinction while allowing the continued delivery of Central Arizona Project water. As the factors that limit survival of native fishes are addressed and species are recovered, ecosystems upon which they depend are also restored. As species and ecosystems are restored, land and water use restrictions on human uses can be eased, thereby benefiting the nation's economy. Through informational programs, the public is educated about the values of native biota and healthy ecosystems, and how they can improve the human environment.

Gila River Basin



Fish Barrier in a desert stream

